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MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

## Roads in the landscape

Clough Williams-Ellis CBE, MC, FRIBA, MTPA, FILA, JP

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## Foreword

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Sometimes, as I look at our new roads thrusting across the countryside, I remember what John Ruskin said about the railways in the Peak District:

'There was a rocky valley between Buxton and Bakewell . . . divina as the Vale of Tempe . . . You enterprise a railroad, you blasted its rocks away . . . And now every fool in Buxton can be at Bakewell in half an hour, and every fool in Bakewell at Buxton.'

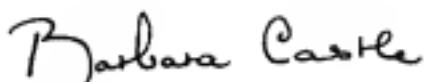
But, if wanting to get from A to B in a hurry is folly, we are all fools. And the fact is that, for the most part the railways were well-engineered.

Today they are an acceptable part of the countryside and more than a little sentiment goes into the efforts that are made to save those which do not pay.

Whether people ever come to feel the same way about motorways depends on our efforts today, and in particular on the efforts of the engineers building the roads and the excellent Committee on the Landscaping of Trunk Roads which advises my Ministry.

The Committee is now ten years old and Mr. Clough Williams-Ellis is one of its original members. He is of course a distinguished architect and a prominent member of the Council for the Protection of Rural Wales. He knows about design and he knows how precious our countryside is. And in this booklet he sets out how, by first rate design, by intelligent and sensitive landscaping . . . and occasionally by re-routeing . . . we can fit our roads into that landscape.

Of course, although some satisfying results can already be seen, it will be many years before any final judgement can be made of the quality of the Committee's work and the quality of the work of our engineers and designers. Meanwhile, as Mr. Williams-Ellis shows, we are doing everything we can to ensure that posterity thinks well of our efforts.



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# 1 History of Road development

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The Minister of Transport, a lover of our countryside and keenly concerned that everything possible shall be done to protect its beauty by the careful routeing and proper landscaping of all new roads, has authorised the publication of this booklet.

**Aim** Its aim is to explain just how our great civil engineering programmes for motorway and trunk road construction are planned and executed in the interest of all concerned. Apart from their actual users these include their adjoining neighbours, particularly those who have had to yield up land, and, obviously, our people as a whole. For, apart from the prime purpose of providing urgently needed new roads safe for fast modern traffic, deep consideration is now given to the preservation of old landscape harmonies and, wherever possible, the creation of new. It is this "Amenity" aspect of the work that is chiefly considered here, but even that can be better appreciated after a brief backward glance at our long road history.

**History** Transport has always been a major factor in man's progress towards civilization, the sea and the rivers being for millenia the easier option as against overland travel. As for roads, going no further back than the Romans, it was mainly a matter of contriving the shortest practicable route between A and far distant B—both being military or administrative government centres. These highways were of course ordained and constructed by the occupying power without reference to the needs or desires of the native population. Thus none of the teasing modern questions of farm severance, land acquisition or still less the protection of amenity then arose, or, if they did, were blithely brushed aside by the road builders obeying the imperial edict.

**Packhorses** Still using (though not maintaining) the skeletal Roman trunk network, the native British gradually through the centuries here and there up-graded meandering rustic and inter-village paths and packhorse tracks into lanes ultimately more-or-less practicable for minimal wheeled traffic, at any rate in summer. Many long-distance over-land drove-ways for the mass movement of cattle on the hoof were early established, the drovers violently objecting when, eventually, their wide immemorial tracks were narrowly confined and hard-surfaced for the better safety and convenience of all but their original wayfarers, the cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, geese and turkeys that all preferred soft-going and free wayside grazing.

**Wheels** It was understandably not until wheeled traffic began at last to appear as

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a new and significant factor in transport that even the smallest effort was made (in 1555) to do something about building roads passably fit to meet the emergent demand. But wheeled traffic did not really begin to be important until the beginning of the 18th century when, however, it was much frowned upon and discouraged by those then (1706) charged with road-upkeep—the complaint being that wheels unduly damaged such surfaces as were contrived and, if allowed at all, then the wheels ought to be wide enough to act as rollers (18 inches was suggested as suitable) and forbidden to bear loads above a certain weight.

**Turnpike trusts.** Into this totally ineffective traffic vacuum had been gradually sucked a makeshift patchwork-palliative—the Turnpike Trusts—random groups of local people, who in return for their offer to build or maintain a certain section of highway, were conceded the right (in 1663) to erect gates and to charge all wayfarers a toll according to a stated tariff.

Gradually and sporadically over 1,000 of these Turnpike Trusts spread themselves here and there about the land, on no coherent system, but only where the members of the particular Trust (mostly local landowners and leading tradesmen) thought it would be of benefit to themselves and, above all, profitable.

**Highway Acts.** A few made a more or less proper job of it, but many just secured their right to levy tolls on all men, beasts and vehicles who had to pass their way and did little or nothing about actual road-building or maintenance. There were elaborate but totally ineffective highway acts passed by Parliament in 1773 and 1822 (neither with the support of the Government) with the aim of bringing some sort of order out of the prevailing chaos. But the Turnpike Trusts continued, almost more of a private racket than a public service, right down to their final abolition in 1832 when the Reformed Parliament formally handed over road responsibility to the Parishes, whose duties up to then had been ill-defined, quite inadequate and largely neglected.

**Telford and Macadam.** This was fragmentation enough, but it did assure a certain continuity and impose a legal responsibility, which, later, under county supervision could actually be enforced. Pressure for reform came chiefly from the G.P.O., Sir Henry Parnell (an M.P.) and from Lord Congleton whose influence, incidentally, gave those two famous road men, Telford and Macadam, their chance to show their quality—the great Holyhead Road (the present A-5) being their most notable joint memorial. Yet even on this, the show-piece of Grand Trunk Roadmanship, there long remained nearly 200 miles of its length still subject to the exactions of over a score of independent Turnpike Trusts—the last toll-gate surprisingly surviving indeed (in Anglesey) until ceremoniously removed on November 1st, 1895.

**Railway Competition.** From 1830 to 1850 road building enterprises were checked by what their sponsors called "The Calamity of the Railways"—their promotion schemes, sometimes as wild-cat and fraudulent as those of the worst of the

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Plate 1: A 423 DORCHESTER, OXFORDSHIRE. An old toll house.

Plate 2: A photograph prepared for an inspection of the alternative routes for a motorway which shows the road in its landscape setting.



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now largely discredited Turnpike Trusts, threatening to drain away both finance and users from the projected new highways.

**Riots** On top of this unlooked for competition came the ominous "Rebecca Riots" in Carmarthenshire, where the local populace, rebelling against the harsh exaction of the toll keepers, tore down the gates, wrecked and burnt the tollhouses, and chased the wretched collectors (the "Pikemen") away into the night, before making their own escape. It was perhaps this spirited militancy as well as the rapidly growing industrial importance of South Wales that prompted a real attempt at highway reform in that region under the Rural Sanitary Authorities sponsored by the Local Government Board.

**Coaches and bicycles** The old idea that vehicles must adapt themselves to the roads rather than that the roads should be made fit for the vehicles had been challenged by the steadily accelerated stage coaches that had been the pride of our highways for over a century when the railways finally killed them. A quite fresh and urgent demand for further road improvement came in the 1870s from the swelling ranks of the "penny-farthing" bicyclists—soon powerfully re-inforced by the vastly larger public that the newly invented 'safety' bicycle with pneumatic tyres had set adventurously pedalling along all the pot-holed and dusty or muddy roads of Britain. True, 'Highway Districts' had been established in 1872 under the Home Office, but with small effect, and it was not until the motorcar had gradually begun to replace horse-drawn vehicles that any real urgency was apparent in the improvement of administration or in the actual roads themselves.

**Cars** Though practicable cars had begun to appear on our roads in the early nineties, they were still officially suspect and only allowed thereon if preceded by a man walking ahead with a red flag—a requirement only withdrawn in 1896. Even in 1903 the legal speed limit was 20 miles an hour—which—given the cars and roads as they existed—was perhaps not as unreasonable as the new ranks of enthusiastic motorists insisted. Apart from their formidably growing numbers, their ranks naturally contained a large number of "Top People" who could command some attention and get their complaints and demands given official attention at all levels, up to and including Parliament. But any will to road improvement was still impeded by the fantastic sub-divisions of responsibility. Right down to 1913 the upkeep of the Great North Road between London and Edinburgh was the concern of no less than 72 separate authorities.

**The Road Board** The setting up of a 'Road Board' by Lloyd George in 1909 that could give grants in aid of new improvements (but not for repairs or maintenance) was a step towards centralisation whilst supervising powers granted to County Councils further extended co-ordination and control but there was still no National Authority. This did not come until 1919 when the Ministry of Transport was first established under its own Minister.

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Plate 3: M6 LANCASHIRE. Gathurst viaduct leading to a well aligned and gently curving section of the motorway. (Ack: Aeroviews Ltd.).



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## 2 The Landscape Advisory Committee—its aims and functions

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**The Advisory Committee** In 1956 the then Minister—Mr. Watkinson—set up a standing committee to advise him on the Landscape Treatment of Trunk Roads, an advisory body such as had been suggested as expedient by the amenity-conscious minority as long ago as 1929—but never appointed.

This standing committee of (at present) 13 members (a list of Members and bodies represented is in Appendix I) consists partly of those representing certain relevant amenity bodies and partly of independent members appointed because of their special knowledge of and interest in matters bound to be involved in efforts to give all possible grace to the most extensive and widespread public works of our era—the new trunk roads and motorways. The meetings of the Committee, normally monthly, held at the Ministry of Transport, are interspersed with inspections of the actual sites of proposed works, and of works in progress or lately completed all up and down the country, a report thereon being invariably submitted to the Ministry with such recommendations, commendations or condemnations as seem to be called for.

**Its functions and co-operation with the Ministry** In all this the Ministry supports and services the Committee, providing a secretariat, making all the necessary arrangements for transport for the site meetings with engineers, planning officers and other relevant persons and generally seeing to it that whatever help the Committee can give is most effectively employed in their joint endeavour—the provision of really fine and handsome roads. Serving on the Committee are architects and landscape architects, land surveyors, forestry experts, horticulturists, land-owners, agriculturists and representatives of road users. So all matters likely to arise in road routing and road making other than the actual engineering and construction are likely to be pretty well covered by the special skills and experiences of the members. Sometimes when the Committee, or a representative quorum, cannot arrange to inspect some particular project on which the Ministry seeks its opinion, one or two members with qualifications appropriate to the particular mission (often with intimate local knowledge) will go along and subsequently submit a report to

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Plate 4: A.1, YORKSHIRE. Wentbridge Viaduct allows the landscape to flow beneath the road without interruption.

Plate 5: A.465. HEADS OF THE VALLEY ROAD, SOUTH WALES. Taf Fechan Bridge.



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the next meeting for discussion, when it will be debated, amended if thought necessary, and then, if accepted, passed on to the Department for consideration and such action as is deemed necessary.

**Engineers** But it is of course, inevitably and most properly, the engineers who will be responsible for the actual building of the intended road who, under the general policy direction of the Minister, have the last word as well as the first. It is for them to propose a route that appears to them to be the most practicable and economical, (with due regard, of course, to proposals for highways in any development plans which will have been approved by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government), determined by a detailed survey of the subsoil and geology as well as of all surface features and obstacles and a watchful concern that "cut and fill" (the excavation for cuttings and the build-up of embankments) shall locally equal-out as near as may be. Also there are certain mandatory standards that must be observed, maximum gradients, minimum radii for curves, length of site lines and so on from which there can be no departure. The Advisory Committee can and sometimes does question the engineers' choice of route and suggests alternatives that may seem to it preferable as less damaging to the scenery or other amenities or as being less disturbing to agriculture. Sometimes further surveys will reveal some such alternative as being as acceptable as the original one from an engineering and economic point of view when it is given more detailed consideration, or, more often, it will be explained that for a number of good practical reasons, usually geological, such other routes, though practicable, would involve various difficulties, hazards and additional costs that it is the engineers' business to avoid or minimize.

**Debate** The Department, having been represented at the meetings of the Advisory Committee where the merits of all such schemes are debated pro and con, with the relevant maps and reconnaissance reports all available, has to advise the Minister, and it is on such advice that the Minister's decision is finally based. This decision on the route having been made and duly announced, the Committee then comes in again on matters of detailed amenity treatment. It may suggest a slight deviation from the proposed lines here or there to spare visually important trees or buildings or to gain a better view this way or that, to minimise farm or field severance or damage to existing amenities of any sort. It also considers the visual impact of the more prominent cuttings and embankments and may seek modification of their slopes with a view to gaining greater landscape harmony. Similarly with the more significant bridges though these are not strictly within its terms of reference.

**Planting** It is in the matter of planting that the Committee's activity is, or will become, most clearly apparent to the general public—a matter in which it has the invaluable expert co-operation of the Department's horticultural officers as well as

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Plate 6: M.1. SOUTHERN EXTENSION, HERTFORDSHIRE. Earth mounds thrown up to screen an adjoining electricity station. Planting will eventually complete the screening.

Plate 7: M.4/M.5 ALMONDSBURY INTERCHANGE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE. Model used to design the contouring of the land within the road complex.

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(now) of the Forestry Commission both in practical advice and in actual planting and subsequent maintenance. Such fruitful co-operation was lacking in the Committee's early days, and this, coupled with the shortage of technical staff at the Ministry, was sadly reflected in the disappointing results of the first plantings along the M.1. and elsewhere.

Since then the Ministry has, however, appointed its own landscape architect so that advice is readily available at the early stages of road design and construction and has increased the Horticultural Adviser's staff so that there can be adequate supervision of the execution and maintenance of all approved planting schemes. The volume of work that can be undertaken by the Landscape Committee is, of course, limited, and day to day detailed advice on landscape matters is given by the Ministry's staff.

The co-operation and interaction between the Department and the Advisory Committee would really be best appreciated by reference to the formidable file of reports that now covers a decade of continuous activity, but these are confidential to the Minister. They are, of course, discussed with the Department and are sometimes modified in the light of further technical or other information—and then transmitted onwards and upwards through the official channels for consideration where final decisions are taken. It is because its members feel that, having been appointed to advise, their representations really are heeded and acted upon, that, after ten years' experience, they are still zealous voluntarily to serve the cause of amenity wherever and whenever they can. That zeal is all the greater because successive Ministers have clearly shown such keen interest in the work.

**County Councils** Although the Forestry Commission is the chief planting agent for the Ministry, and carries out work in most parts of England and Wales, eight County authorities (Appendix II) act as agents for planting on trunk roads and motorways. These authorities had already built up horticultural staffs for the purpose before the arrangements were made for the Forestry Commission to undertake roadside planting. Additionally, from time to time, urban local authorities carry out planting schemes within their boundaries on behalf of the Ministry. Some County Councils and other local authorities take an active interest in the landscape treatment of these roads for which they and not the Minister are the highway authority and both plan and execute the planting schemes along them.

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Plate 8: A.40, ISLIP, OXFORDSHIRE. Vegetation retained in the central reserve and old bends used for lay-bys when a second carriageway was added. (Ack: Aero Surveys, Coventry).



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### 3 Land acquisition and amenity

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**Land acquisition** All new roads inevitably eat up land that belongs to someone, whether in private ownership or public (as in the case of commons) and the acquisition of such needed land involves negotiation, with compulsory purchase powers held in reserve. The delays that seem to some both inexplicable and infuriating, are the price we have to pay for our democratic processes and a regard for the rights of private citizens. Some roadside owners will benefit from the coming of a new highway whilst others may resent it, but along its whole length efforts are made to make it acceptable to its neighbours as well as sympathetic to the landscape as a whole. This is what "Landscaping" is about, an art so widely and splendidly practised in the 18th Century, so tragically neglected throughout the Industrial Revolution but now called in again and on a grand scale, to make a positive 20th Century addition to Britain's beauty.

**Amenity treatment** Apart from the closely studied and detailed line of the road itself, the prime elements in this specialised landscaping are tree planting and, ideally, the apt contouring of all ground affected by the works, especially as regards cuttings and embankments, where the aim is to harmonise new surfaces with the original natural ones adjoining so that new and old merge graciously without a visual jolt. Similarly with tree planting, integration with whatever exists is sought rather than any independent highway pattern of planting that would have the very reverse effect of isolating the road from its natural setting and emphasising the fact of its intrusion. So, wherever there are existing trees of scenic value within or near the boundaries of the road, it is the general practice to reinforce such with additional new planting usually of the same species so as to form really significant groups in scale with the trunk road or motorway where a mere peppering of individual trees would only register with fast moving traffic as a tiresome irritant, if at all. Existing trees in private ownership that are visually important can be safeguarded by a Tree Preservation Order prepared by the Local Planning Authority, and subsequently confirmed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

**Speed** It is only gradually that traffic speed has come to be recognized as an all-important factor in road landscape design—the fast moving driver cannot and

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Plate 9: Transplants being planted by Forestry Commission workers on a motorway cutting slope.  
Plate 10: A1. (M) DONCASTER BY-PASS. Small transplants will extend an existing woodland within the motorway boundary.



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should not have eyes for minor wayside detail, but he can safely contemplate and enjoy the larger elements of a well composed landscape as it unfolds before him. It has indeed been statistically established that dull stretches of road are actually dangerous, as a driver who is bored tends also to be somnolent as has been amply proved by the high accident rate on the unrelieved "long straights" of the earlier German *Autobahnen*. Not that the careful detailing of new roads is solely in the interests of their users. Due account is also taken of the visual effect of all that is done on the surrounding landscape as seen from other roads or viewpoints. We are, as it were, adding stitches to the fine old but somewhat tattered tapestry that is our countryside, and if such a ploy does not deserve our very best endeavours—what does?

**Public opinion** Yet no new road can please or benefit everyone as is often made clear by objectors who are always given a patient hearing. Justly to reconcile the claims of utility and amenity will always be difficult, for though you can reckon the cost of a motorway at so much a mile, who can evaluate a view? Nevertheless, when, for instance it was a question of either disrupting Charnwood Forest by the Midlands to Yorkshire M.1 or making a half mile detour at extra cost, the Minister of the day chose the latter civilized alternative with the country's general approval.

It is the undoubtedly fact of both Government and public becoming more amenity-minded that so powerfully supports and encourages the Landscape Advisory Committee in its efforts. This concern for landscape is now happily shared by most engineers and by the officers of the counties that often act as the Ministry's agents, all realising that amenity provisions are an essential part of any civilized planning.



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## 4 Practical considerations of landscaping

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**Trees** Having approved or modified the line of some stretch of new roadway the Advisory Committee studies the effect of the necessary earthworks on the surrounding country, with particular regard to the need for sympathetic contouring where this arises. It next considers what planting, if any, seems to be called for, the essential first step being for horticultural officers to make their detailed local study of soil conditions, exposure, and the relative vigour of existing trees of different species, which give essential data for final planting plans. The choice of trees is normally, but not entirely, restricted to such as are natural and native to the locality, with anything suggestive of the small scale suburban shrubbery-pokery, sedulously avoided.

**Tree shifting** With the new machines imported from the USA by the National Coal Board for the re-habilitation of its open cast workings, the transplanting of sizable forest trees is now perfectly practicable but an expensive and not always successful expedient that can only be resorted to in special cases.

**Grass** There are, on the average, 6 acres of isolated and unfarmable grassland to every mile of motorway and the Committee concerns itself not only with the planting of this land, but also with its maintenance.

The mowing of cutting and embankment slopes is an expensive operation and there is little tangible return to show for it. The Committee feel that these areas should be mown as little as possible so that in time, a natural, almost self-maintaining plant community will develop.

With the introduction of more intensive and cleaner systems of farming much of the British Flora is being ousted from meadow, pasture and hedgerow, and it seems logical that the roadside verge, particularly on the motorway where pedestrians are forbidden, should become a nature reserve and provide a new and secure habitat for our wild flowers. As an example, the rock cuttings and other sites along the Ross Spur Motorway (M.50) are now regularly visited by parties of naturalists and others interested to see how since the motorway was opened in 1960 nature has

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Plate 13: M.50, ROSS SPUR MOTORWAY. Wild daffodils establishing themselves on the cutting slopes.

Plate 14: A.12, WIDFORD, ESSEX. Trees retained in the central reserve.

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steadily re-established itself there. It is considered that after sowing, grass should be cut fairly regularly during the first two years but only to create a good sward and eliminate injurious weeds. After this period the Committee endeavours to control cutting and the use of chemical sprays, so that eventually a pattern of wild flowers will develop, as they do on some railway cuttings.

**Difficulties** But roadside planting has its special difficulties. The soil has often been densely compacted by the pressure of heavy machinery and lacks the humus and the action of earth worms and microbes to make it fit for ready rooting. Such defects have to be laboriously corrected by boring deep holes and back-filling with humus, and manure or fertilisers. Then there are the hazards of young transplants being smothered by grass and weeds that cannot be easily cut because of them, the blighting effect of salt spray drifting from the road after its use for removing snow and ice, and even the poisonous effect of exhaust fumes. Yet another hazard is drought, especially in the Spring, for watering along a trunk road or motorway is rarely possible—there is for example no piped supply. Investigations are continually being made to find alternatives to grass as ground-cover that may better retain moisture and reduce smothering.

With these difficult conditions small transplants are easier to establish than bigger specimens; being young and vigorous they are much more adaptable than larger older trees. For this reason a great deal of planting is of the forestry type and small trees 9 to 12 inches high are closely spaced to be thinned out as they increase in height and spread.

Trees 6 to 8 feet as supplied by horticultural nurserymen also have their place in roadside planting. These are used where some immediate effect is required such as at the foot of gardens backing onto a motorway, or where only a small group of trees is needed, but extensive ground preparation is necessary to ensure their establishment.

**Avenues** There is certainly a splendour about the great formal avenues surviving from the 18th Century that many would wish to see repeated along our 20th Century motorways, but opinion is unfortunately currently all against them. There is the aesthetic objection, that of too emphatic "segregation" of the road from its natural setting, (except where formality is clearly called for) and the practical ones of the hazard of obstructive tree trunks on the roadside or the danger of frost remaining in the shade of the trees, whilst the rhythmic flicker of light and shade is held to be dazzling to drivers and even hypnotic.

**Dazzle** There is again the ever-present problem of dazzle from opposing headlights that still awaits solution. If we could more generously separate the "up" and "down" carriageways the difficulty would disappear, but in the interests of production and with people naturally reluctant to give up an unnecessary square yard of our limited land for road-making, we have, generally, to make do with a minimal 13 feet strip of central reserve which is too narrow for effective tree or hedge planting and where various anti-dazzle screens have not so far proved fully effective.

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**Track separation** On more-or-less sterile uplands and sometimes on hill sides, a wider separation of the two tracks can be not only a pleasant relief from the prevailing parallelism but sometimes a positive economy. Such happy chances of deviation from the norm are unfortunately rare. It is, however, possible to acquire small parcels of land and there are sometimes roadside windfalls in the shape of odd pockets, left-over field corners and such fragments of no agricultural value that the Ministry gladly includes in the roadside verges, such bits and pieces being very welcome, as breaks in the monotony of the fence line and, where appropriate, offering opportunities for group planting, or if not on a motorway, for a layby or rest and picnic reserve.

**Advertisements** One of the Advisory Committee's members reported some forty years ago on the scenic and practical advantages of this deviation technique as exemplified in the then newly opened Westchester Parkway, New York—a brilliant prototype in its day of really imaginative roadmanship and landscaping that was at that time urged on Britain—vainly—and now being taken up again in America, where they have the generous elbow room that we so crampingly lack. The USA's road landscaping record is admirably advanced in many ways, as recently reported by the Ministry of Transport Horticultural Adviser sent out on a reconnaissance. It still seems, however, to lag far behind us in some amenity respects—most notoriously in its toleration of huge and garish roadside bill-boards and advertisements—a barbarity that recently moved even the President to vigorous protest. In that respect at least, we are ourselves now far more civilized than at any time within living memory—all outdoor advertising having been brought under strict legislative control, none at all being permitted on trunk roads and motorways and verges and even essential notices and direction signs being reduced to a standardised minimum.

**Details** The Advisory Committee has to accept these as necessary, as it does all other road furniture, even such minor items as telephone call-posts, guard rails and such, doing what it can to make their design and siting as visually acceptable as possible, which goes too for roadside fencing, its character being modified as far as maybe in accordance with its background and any established local tradition.

**Inter-changes** It is, of course, only at infrequent intervals that the closed-circuit motorways connect with the old road system by means of an elaborate free-flow "interchange", the still less frequent interchange at the crossing of two motorways being even more complex, covering many acres and piling superimposed roadways up some 60 feet from top to bottom. These great constructions are altogether too large in scale to be subservient to their surroundings, too sure of themselves to be in any way dissembled, played down, or prettified. The Committee's view is that they should be accepted for what they are—fine modern artifacts where perfect and economical fulfilment of function is in itself a pleasure to behold, a pleasure that any attempted softening by extensive tree planting or other camouflage would certainly diminish.

The same consideration has restrained the Committee from advocating tree planting where a particularly distinguished bridge seems worthy of undisputed

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attention, though sometimes the soft outlines of foliage may be welcomed as a foil and contrast to angularity, though not as a screen.

**Screens** Tree screens are usually the best and often the only means of obscuring unsightly buildings or industrial works or waste lands alongside a road—such screening having sometimes the welcome side effect of helping to muffle the noise that inevitably affects all road-side residents. Now, however, as planning authorities are consulted in advance on major schemes by the Ministry and made aware of its proposals it is to be hoped that unhappy juxtapositions should become less frequent nor should it be forgotten that the traffic syphoned off on to a new trunk road or by-pass has automatically brought welcome relief to lately congested towns and villages elsewhere and restored much of their old tranquillity.

**Service Areas** Apart from the highways themselves, the chain of motorway service areas (which originally sometimes included a road maintenance depot) demand the Committee's particular advice and vigilance, as although the actual service required from each may be almost identical, the different concessionaries who build and run them have their own ideas, technical and architectural, as how best to do this, and every site is, of course, itself different.

There are usually a number of concerns competing for each concession, their several proposals illustrated by large scale plans, elevations and perspectives, that the Committee have to evaluate, bearing in mind the nature of the site and of course the complex functions that must be fulfilled—parking lots, fuelling, restaurants, repair depots, lavatories, shops and so on.

Granted that all these requirements appear to be adequately met, various modifications may be recommended with a view to better visual effect near and far and a happier integration with the surrounding landscape. Such large scale establishments almost always need a good deal of judicious tree planting to mitigate their sudden and violent impact on the surrounding countryside and to make them the relatively restful havens from the bustle of the motorways that they are meant to be.

As Service Areas have to be spaced out at more or less regular intervals along a motorway, the choice of site is generally restricted within a somewhat narrow range, and the Committee makes its initial recommendations for general treatment in pretty broad terms before the submission of specific proposals for final examination. A special sub-Committee concentrates on this work.

It is here that the planting of semi-mature trees is held to be justified so as to gain an immediate effect of enclosure, shade, and shelter and because such trees, if adequately staked and guyed, are less liable to damage than the normal smaller transplants.

For the most part we have generally no choice but to wait with what patience we may for the now scarcely visible little trees that border our new highways by the hundred thousand, to grow to maturity and make their increasing contribution to the pleasure of all wayfarers and the beauty of our land. In the nature of things, it cannot be for some long time, even for a generation, that a final judgement can be fairly made as to how successful or otherwise have been our present endeavours.

# Appendix I

## *Advisory Committee on the Landscape Treatment of Trunk Roads*

### **List of Members**

#### *Chairman:*

Sir Eric Savill, KCVO, CBE, MC, MA,  
FRICS

*Independent Member (Director of  
Gardens for The Crown's Windsor  
Estate).*

#### *Deputy Chairman:*

Sir George Taylor, DSc, FRSE, FLA

*Independent Member (Director of the  
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew).*

Mr. J. W. R. Adams, OBE, PPTPI,  
FRGS, PPILA

*Institute of Landscape Architects.*

Sir Ralph Clarke, KBE, TD, DL, MA

*Royal Forestry Society of England,  
Wales and Northern Ireland.*

Mr. D. R. Greig,

*Standing Joint Committee of RAC, AA  
and RSAC.*

Mr. J. St. Bodfan Gruffydd, FILA

*Independent Member.*

Sir George Langley-Taylor, FRIBA,  
FRICS, FLAS, MTPI

*Council for the Preservation of Rural  
England.*

Sir Giles Loder, Bt., FLS, MA

*Independent Member.*

The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Rosse, MBE,  
MA, LLD, MRIA, FSA

*Independent Member.*

Sir Henry Abel Smith, KCMG, KCVO,  
DSO

*Independent Member.*

Mr. F. R. Waley, MC

*Independent Member.*

Mr. C. Williams-Ellis, CBE, MC, FRIBA,  
MTPI, FILA, JP

*Council for the Protection of Rural  
Wales.*

Mr. O. E. P. Wyatt, MC, MA

*Independent Member.*

Representatives of the following other Government Departments attend meetings  
of the Committee:

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,  
Ministry of Housing and Local Government,  
Forestry Commission.

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## Appendix II

**The following is a list of County Authorities who act as agents for the Ministry for planting on those trunk roads and motorways within their county boundaries:**

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Glamorgan	Leicestershire
Hampshire	Lindsey (Lincolnshire)
Kent	Surrey
Lancashire	West Riding of Yorkshire



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